



candy canes and stolen kisses by everybreathemove

Category: Stranger Things, 2016

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Eleven/Jane H., Mike W.

Pairings: Eleven/Jane H./Mike W.

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-12-17 15:23:42

Updated: 2018-12-17 15:23:42

Packaged: 2019-12-12 23:17:11

Rating: K +

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,211

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: (Prompt. Oneshot.) When Mike sneakily hides mistletoe all over their apartment, El only has one question: why bother?

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"El?"

The brunette hums in response, too busy rifling through the record collection in her arms to pay him much mind—there's a copy of Sonic Youth's "Daydream Nation" in there and she's making a note to remind Will.

But then she walks right into him, almost knocking the wind right out of Mike's body.

It's Christmas Eve in the Hopper-Wheeler household. The first of many for the newlywed couple. Mike's got old movies and eggnog on the go, and El's taking a break from baking to set up the record player.

He's stood in the entrance of the guest room—where El keeps Hopper's old box of records—and he's got a finger pointing up and a hand pressed against his chest.

El moves a hand out to his chest, pressing her palm flat against the back of his own hand. "Mike." She breathes, leaning up to press a kiss on his cheek with a small sigh in apology. Then she follows his gaze and glances up, eyes zeroing in on the mistletoe hanging in the doorway.

"Mike!"

Left brow quirked in challenge, Mike bends down to kiss her. He cups her face between his hands, thumbs running along her cheekbones as he gives her a moment to turn him down. But El just rolls her eyes and blushes with the softest of sighs, leaning up to meet him halfway. She tightens her hold on the old records, keeping them pressed up between them as Mike captures her lips in a gentle, searing kiss.

Forcing herself to stand on her tiptoes, El softly whimpers when his fingers run through her hair to pull her closer and savor the taste of peppermint on her lips.

Mike breaks away only a moment later, and he hurriedly presses a sweet kiss to her forehead before he moves to walk around her, making a beeline for the kitchen.

"But," El starts, lips parted in shock. She clutches the records to her chest, watching as Mike just goes about his business in the kitchen, nonchalant and cool.

(That wasn't *enough*.)

She quickly drops her father's records on the guest bed, rubbing her hands together to rid them of any remaining traces of dust. There's dust down her sweater, and icing sugar on her collar, and her lips are kind of sticky from eating one too many candy canes (and she totally blames Holly for those.)

El walks into their bedroom then, heading straight for the chapstick in the top drawer of her bedside table. It's cinnamon and apple flavor—Mike's favorite. She applies a quick coat, smacking her lips together to even it out before making her way back into the hall.

But then she spots it.

There's a piece of mistletoe dangling above the bathroom door across the way, and another on the archway leading out to the balcony. And there's one in the kitchen... and another one right above her.

(Wait...)

"Mike?"

Making his way over to her, Mike just chews at the inside of his cheeks to keep himself from grinning like a madman. He slips his hands behind his back, brows raising in mock curiosity, "Yeah?"

"Why is there mistletoe," El starts, arms folding her chest as she stares up at the doorway to their bedroom, "everywhere?"

"Huh?" Mike blinks. He smiles to himself, head ducking to avoid her gaze as he walks closer.

"Mike!"

"I bought it in bulk."

"In bulk?" She squints with a soft shake of her head, at a loss.

"Like, I bought a lot of it." Mike shrugs, and he steps into line beside her in the doorway.

"I can see that." El just stares up at him plainly, but he can see the faint traces of a smile starting to form on her face.

Mike reaches up to finger the plant, feigning wonder. "Why, do you... Shit, do you not like mistletoe?" He runs his free hand through his hair then, nervously pulling on the ends, "Umm... I can get rid of it. You know, if you want."

(Trust him to screw up their first Christmas together. Alone together. *Together* together.)

"In *bulk*?" El clarifies her confusion. She purses her lips thoughtfully for a moment, eyeing her husband considerably, "Why?"

The black-haired man shrugs, shoulders slumping. He raises both brows, hands slipping into the front pockets of his jeans, "So I can kiss you in every room."

He grins then, sheepish and almost boylike, corners of his mouth curling up as the smile slowly spreads across his whole face—nose wrinkling beneath a splattering of freckles, eyes widening at the amused (if not disbelieving) look on her face.

"Mike," El says, hands smoothing up his chest to grab his shoulders. She fists the material of his woolly sweater, pulling him closer and pressing up on her tiptoes with a twist of her ankles, "You can kiss me whenever you want anyway." El quirks a single brow, head dipping but keeping her eyes locked on his face. She stares up at him through long lashes, blowing a fallen strand of hair from her face. He tucks the hair behind her ear with his left hand, frowning.

"Yeah, but," Mike starts, licking his lips just as his gaze drops onto her own, "now I have an excuse." Pulling his right hand from his pocket, Mike places it on her hip to bring her closer with a small tug.

El smiles, rasps, "You don't need an excuse." She giggles, cheeks puffing out as her smile broadens into a full-fledged smirk, "And neither do I."

She pushes up on her toes then, pulling him down into a silent kiss. Her lips press simply against his, pure and sweet and wildly innocent. El clasps her hands behind his neck, freely lifting her heels from the ground and ever so slightly levitating in front of him (and if he notices at all, Mike doesn't mention it.) She withdraws from the kiss after a second, a hand sliding down his frame to toy with the neck of his sweater as the other runs through his hair—black and unruly and a complete mess.)

Brows furrowing in mild irritation, El sighs, "You're getting a comb for Christmas." She nods (mostly to herself) and bites her lip to stop herself from tutting him.

Mike can't help but snicker. His palms tighten around her waist though, and he pulls her closer until she's firmly pressed up against him, "I'm alright with that as long as I get you, too."

The young woman blushes, but she keeps her eyes on his—hazel and honeyed and beautiful. El says, "You've had me since we were twelve."

Closing his eyes with a smallest of smiles, Mike leans in to rest his forehead against hers, breathing in the sweet scent of peppermint and spice radiating off of her.

Her lips taste like candy canes, and there's a light sprinkling of icing sugar on the collar of her shirt, tucked away beneath the sweater he'd bought her.

Mike smiles, unable to help himself, "You've had me since you were Eleven."